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Crisis Intervention for Law Enforcement Negotiators

By CHUCK REGINI, M.A.



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On March 17, 2000, an accused murderer went to the apartment of his estranged girlfriend's mother and took her, her boyfriend, and their son hostage. His only demand was to talk to his girlfriend. The police department responded and began negotiating with him. For over 4 days, the subject repeatedly demanded, threatened, and attempted to manipulate negotiators into bringing his girlfriend to the location. He had an extensive

history of domestic violence and exhibited suicide and suicide-by-cop behavior. Negotiators elected not to bring his girlfriend to the location, fearing that he might harm the hostages to get revenge against the girlfriend and, subsequently, kill himself. The subject was extremely violent during the incident, often shooting out of the apartment windows at nearby special weapons and tactical (SWAT) officers and their armored vehicles. While

negotiators attempted to stabilize the subject's violent behavior and keep the hostages alive during the ongoing incident, one of the hostages drugged him; he fell asleep, and two of the hostages escaped. The police department's tactical team entered the apartment to rescue the remaining hostage, encountered the subject brandishing a weapon, and shot and killed him.

BACKGROUND

This actual incident demonstrates the typical behaviors associated with crisis situations in the United States. Law enforcement agencies frequently respond to incidents where emotionally violent subjects have barricaded themselves in a location with or without hostages. The FBI's Crisis Negotiation Unit (CNU) identified two distinct types of behavior that subjects typically demonstrate in hostage and barricade incidents—hostage and nonhostage. The subject's demands or lack thereof is a basic defining factor of these two types of behavior. Hostage incidents involve a subject who has taken hostages and has a substantive demand, something that the individual cannot attain without extorting authorities through the act of hostage-taking. In nonhostage incidents, on the other hand, the subject does not have any demands, or the demands are nonsubstantive. Often, the only

demand in non-hostage incidents is for police to leave them alone. Nonhostage incidents also encompass single barricade situations in which the subject has barricaded himself without any hostages being present, as well as attempted suicides or suicide-in-progress situations.¹

The overwhelming majority of hostage-barricade incidents handled by police negotiators are nonhostage. Local and state law enforcement agencies rarely respond to incidents in which a deliberate and methodical subject intentionally has taken hostages to attain a planned goal.² Law enforcement negotiators more often become involved in incidents in which an altercation, such as a domestic dispute, has escalated beyond a subject's control. The subjects in these incidents typically are

extremely emotional, and their emotions primarily dictate their behavior. They are in a crisis state, defined as a situation that exceeds their ability to cope and often is a reaction to a real or perceived loss or a threat to what people expect of their lives.³

The threat could be a loss of freedom, as in the case of a barricaded subject afraid of incarceration or the potential loss of the relationship of a loved one or child, evident in many domestic dispute-related barricade and hostage situations. In all cases, the situation has caused the subject to be highly emotional, irrational, and unreasonable. The emotional reaction of the individual makes the situation a crisis, not the facts and circumstances of the situation itself.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

Crisis intervention is a type of short-term psychological intervention used to help individuals experiencing temporary extreme emotions to recognize, correct, and cope with them.⁴ Crisis intervention theory began in the late 1940s through work with individuals who experienced a crisis reaction related to grief and depression. These individuals had no specific pathological diagnosis but simply exhibited severe emotional symptoms. Crisis intervention subsequently expanded in the 1960s to include individuals experiencing all types of traumatic life events.⁵

Members of the FBI's CNU continue to adapt and use crisis intervention concepts and techniques in hostage-barricade incidents. Negotiation courses administered by members of the unit, as well as many other police agencies and academic institutions, teach these concepts and techniques. The skills primarily are used in nonhostage situations but also apply in hostage incidents. By applying crisis intervention skills, negotiators can help subjects in crisis defuse their emotions, lowering the potential for violence in an incident and buying time for better decision making and tactical preparations. At the same time, the application of these skills moves the subject



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toward a rational problem-solving discussion to resolve the incident. The goal of crisis negotiations is not helping them work through life's difficulties. Crisis negotiation is not therapy or a method of assisting hostage-barricade subjects cope with their problems or psychosis. Naturally, assisting the subject in finding alternate coping methods, other than violently acting out, is a by-product of the short-term goal of resolving the incident. However, the primary focus of negotiators is the resolution of the situation with no loss of life, which may require them to use crisis intervention skills to facilitate a tactical resolution. This focus constitutes one of the primary reasons why crisis negotiation, while using many skills derived from crisis intervention and psychology, remains the responsibility of law enforcement, not mental health professionals. Crisis intervention in crisis negotiation comprises the concepts of empathy, active listening communication skills, a nonjudgmental attitude, boundary setting, acknowledgment of distorted thinking through reframing, and problem solving.

CONCEPTS

Empathy

Empathy is the cornerstone of crisis intervention; it involves *demonstrating* the act of

listening to the subject and understanding the individual's situation and the emotional reaction to it with the purpose of establishing a basic trust relationship. This trust is necessary to achieve a behavioral change in the subject. No peaceful resolution can occur without some degree of trust between the individual and the negotiator.

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A collaborative, trust-based, mutually respectful relationship is not possible if the subject can control, manipulate, and humiliate the negotiator.

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Emotions are the great human common denominator; people can identify with those of another person without having had the same experiences. Regardless of life events, everyone has encountered depression, anger, and frustration. One of the first principles in crisis intervention is to listen for the emotions exhibited by the subject and how they relate to the facts of the situation.⁶ Empathy is not pity; feeling

sorry for the person does not promote a trust relationship but, rather, separates a negotiator from the subject.⁷ Instead, empathy means accurately understanding the content and emotions that the individual is communicating and then reflecting it back to *demonstrate* listening and understanding. Simply stating “I understand what you’re saying” is not an empathic communication approach. The *demonstration* of empathy most effectively is accomplished through the use of active listening skills.

Active Listening Skills

Active listening skills are specific communication techniques designed to *demonstrate* understanding, encourage the subject to talk and verbally vent emotions, and build rapport between the individual and the negotiator.⁸ A variety of different active listening skills exists, all of which involve reflecting back to the subject the facts or content of what the person is saying and the emotions surrounding the content. The CNU teaches eight different techniques: emotion labeling, paraphrasing, reflecting/mirroring, effective pauses, minimal encouragers, “I” messages, summarization, and open-ended questions/statements.⁹ These specific skills have proven appropriate for use in law enforcement crisis negotiation.

Nonjudgmental Attitude

Another aspect of empathy involves listening for the subject's values or what he feels is important. Negotiators then can demonstrate that they have heard and understood this critical information. These actions denote a significant step in rapport development because this often requires a negotiator to read between the lines of what the individual states. For example, if a subject becomes violently angry over his wife leaving him for another man and, subsequently, takes her hostage to prevent her from moving out of their house, a negotiator could say to the subject, "It sounds like your relationship with your wife is very important to you." Values are typically associated with another person or allegiance to a concept. Values also can be the source for potential theme development, or "hooks." For instance, a subject who identifies himself as having old-fashioned values may have a potential hook in his allegiance to his family or certain relatives.

Rapid establishment of rapport through a demonstration of empathy combined with a nonjudgmental approach indicates negotiation progress in an emotionally charged hostage-barricade situation. A nonjudgmental approach requires conveying acceptance and

neutrality. The negotiator must ensure that personal opinions and values are not apparent or stated. Negotiators do not have to agree with the subject's actions; they simply can validate his emotions as understandable and treat him with respect and dignity. A conservative approach to maintaining a nonjudgmental demeanor is focusing on the observable behavior and not the individual person—negotiators should use observations, not inferences. For example, instead of saying "When *you* do that...." say "When *that* happens...."

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These actions denote a significant step in rapport development....

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Boundaries

Frequently, instances occur when individuals in crisis attempt to blame the negotiator for their situations or even use blame or guilt as a form of manipulation to establish control, get revenge, or simply test boundaries and hear the reaction of the negotiator. A subject may say something like

"If you don't do as I say, I'm going to kill her, and it'll be your fault." This type of behavior also frequently is observed with suicidal subjects, such as a person threatening to jump off a bridge for attention-seeking purposes or some motivation other than suicide. The subject has no real intention of committing suicide, but often is simply acting out or being manipulative.¹⁰ A collaborative, trust-based, mutually respectful relationship is not possible if the subject can control, manipulate, and humiliate the negotiator. Negotiators, in a nonauthoritative and nonjudgmental manner, should require subjects to treat them appropriately and communicate openly and honestly. Further, negotiators should not allow subjects to blame or threaten them. Sometimes, negotiators must confront subjects' counterproductive, self-destructive behaviors. Negotiators should use problem ownership and boundary setting as tactics to remind subjects that they have control over their own actions and are responsible for their own problems.

Reframing

Emotional responses also are associated with dysfunctional or maladaptive thinking patterns learned over the course of a person's development. People sometimes react emotionally

to a situation based upon what they think of themselves or what they perceive others think of them, particularly as it relates to interpersonal relationships, in terms of adequacy, competence, or the ability of others to relate or care for them.¹¹ Many people have learned unrealistic values, beliefs, and expectations that cause them to expect too much from themselves or others. This, combined with a “black and white” or “all or nothing” foundation, leads to irrational thinking and extreme emotional responses due to the inability to live up to a person’s own expectations or the expectations individuals believe others have for them. For example, an individual who thinks that his personal relationship is related to his job may believe that the ability of others to care for him is directly linked to the type of job he has. If he loses his job, he may go into an emotional crisis because he may think that his friends and family no longer will care for him. He might feel that he is a complete failure in all aspects of life. Such distorted thinking is based in negative themes and rigid thinking patterns. Crisis negotiators can assist an emotional subject through reframing and reformatting these negative themes into positive ones by helping change the subject’s thinking pattern. For example, in the previous

illustration, a negotiator could reframe the individual’s thinking by simply stating, “It sounds to me that maintaining a job and providing for your family is important to you; you obviously are a dedicated employee and an excellent husband and father.” In other words, the negotiator takes a liability and turns it into an asset. Although negotiators should not oversimplify the situation or appear superficial, they can assist the subject in finding a situation’s positive characteristics.



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Problem Solving

The basic focus of a crisis intervention communication approach is to demonstrate empathy to establish some type of basic trust relationship and to move the subject out of the overly emotional state to a more rational one by allowing the person to vent his emotions.

Once in a more rational state, negotiators can begin problem solving to find alternatives to cope with the subject’s current issue and resolve the incident. Collaborative problem solving can be accomplished only after working through the subject’s emotions and establishing a trust-based relationship.

Problem solving in crisis negotiation involves a collaborative analysis between the subject and negotiator to find solutions acceptable to both.¹² Rather than directing the individual or giving advice on what he should do, negotiators should share information and ideas. For example, one effective approach negotiators can use during problem solving is to ask “What do you think of...” rather than “I think you need to...” and allow the subject to voice his concerns over proposed solutions. Once the person voices his concerns, the negotiator then can begin to address them. Negotiators should explore alternatives with the subject, rather than appearing authoritative and attempting to direct him. Frequently, getting agreement from the individual helps as well (e.g., “Does that sound good to you?”) The subject may confront the negotiator with negative responses. Therefore, rather than attempting to persuade the person to see a particular point of view,

the negotiator should try to get him to identify underlying concerns that cause obstacles to agreement and form the basis for his rejection of a proposed solution. Negotiators can state, "It seems that we are working toward resolving this. There still seems to be something holding us up. What is it about the things we've been discussing that bothers you?" or "Help me understand what's holding us up from working something out to resolve this."

Once a resolution has been reached, problem solving is not complete until a discussion occurs of how to implement any agreed-upon solution. Negotiators should plan the implementation steps with the subject, including the first step of the individual's coming out of the crisis site. During problem solving, negotiators should keep the dialogue focused on resolving the incident and may need to be more subtly directive and persuasive. At this stage, after building some degree of rapport and trust with the subject and receiving clear verbal and behavioral indications that he is ready to consider alternative solutions, the negotiation team consistently, subtly, and deliberately should move him toward resolution of the situation. Negotiators must continue to assess the dynamics of the subject's behavior because he may fluctuate between rational

and emotional states. Negotiators should be prepared to move back into more of an intervention-oriented dialogue using additional active listening skills if the individual returns to a more emotional state.

CONCLUSION

The types of incidents law enforcement crisis negotiators face today require a thorough understanding of crisis intervention techniques. Such procedures have resulted in the

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...these techniques require consistent reinforcement and practice to maintain the necessary level of proficiency.

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successful resolution of countless hostage-barricade situations and have saved numerous lives, including those of police officers not forced to confront emotionally volatile and violent subjects with force.

When initiating crisis intervention techniques, negotiators should remember that the facts of the situation do not make it a crisis but, rather, the subject's emotional reaction to the facts. By employing the use of such

concepts as empathy, active listening skills, nonjudgmental attitude, boundary setting, and problem solving, negotiators can move toward resolving the incident. Although not complicated, these techniques require consistent reinforcement and practice to maintain the necessary level of proficiency. ♦

Endnotes

¹ For illustrative purposes and to maintain clarity, the author employs masculine pronouns for subjects.

² FBI Hostage Barricade Statistics (HOBAS).

³ Albert R. Roberts, *Crisis Intervention and Time-Limited Cognitive Treatment* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995).

⁴ B. Gilliland and R. James, *Crisis Intervention Strategies* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1997).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Leslie S. Greenburg, *Emotion Focused Therapy* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002).

⁷ G. Noesner and M. Webster, "Using Active Listening Skills," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, August 1997, 13-19.

⁸ Albert R. Roberts, "Crisis Intervention and Trauma Treatment: The Integrative ACT Intervention Model, *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention* (Spring 2002), 1-21. For additional information on building rapport, see Vincent A. Sandoval and Susan H. Adams, "Subtle Skills for Building Rapport," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, August 2001, 1-5.

⁹ Supra note 7.

¹⁰ Douglas G. Jacobs, *The Harvard Medical School Guide to Suicide Assessment and Intervention* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

¹¹ Supra note 4.

¹² Supra note 3.



Are You Telling Me the Truth? Indicators of Veracity in Written Statements

By Susan H. Adams, Ph.D., and John P. Jarvis, Ph.D.

While reporting her abduction from a shopping center parking lot, a young woman described seemingly implausible events to responding officers. When they asked her to recount everything that happened, however, she described the smell of motor oil on the assailant's hands. Her inclusion of such a unique sensory detail as a specific smell alerted the officers to the possibility that the allegation, as improbable as it appeared, might be true. Further investigation confirmed that the victim provided a truthful account.

Investigators frequently focus on indicators of deception¹ to determine whether a suspect's or victim's account of a criminal incident is truthful or deceptive. Often, however, they overlook indicators of truthfulness, or veracity,² in the process. To study the relationships between veracity and

features of written statements, the authors examined 60 narratives written by suspects and victims. The authors found three features of the statements—the length of the criminal incident section, the presence of unique sensory details, and the inclusion of emotions—that accurately discriminated truthful statements from deceptive ones.

Length of Criminal Incident Section

Suspects and victims depicting criminal incidents typically include information preceding and following the description of the incident itself. Because of this, investigators can divide written statements into three sections: the introduction, the criminal incident, and the conclusion. The introduction establishes the context of the crime by providing details of when and where specific actions occurred. The criminal incident section answers the questions of what happened, how the crime occurred, and who was involved. The conclusion portrays the individual's actions following the crime, such as calling 911, crying, or shaking.

In calculating the length of each section in a statement, the first word of the statement marks the beginning of the introduction. The point in the statement where the criminal incident begins also determines the end of the introduction. The conclusion starts when the criminal incident section stops and then continues to the end of the statement. The following quotes from a robbery statement illustrate these three sections:

Introduction:

"My husband and I were sitting in the first booth on the right as you come into the restaurant."

Criminal incident:

"I heard a loud bang, like a firecracker, and shouts to lay down on the floor, and I knew the restaurant was being robbed. I saw two men with ski masks. The taller man had a rifle or a shotgun."

Conclusion:

“We stayed under the table until the police came.”

In this statement, the introduction section began with the first word. The criminal incident section started when the restaurant patron described hearing the loud bang of a gunshot because, at this point, law enforcement authorities would intervene.³ This section continued until the description of the robbery ended. The conclusion section followed, with a description of the actions occurring after the robbery.

Investigators actually can draw a border around the criminal incident section. By simply glancing at the entire written statement, they can see the relative length of the criminal incident section. Those desiring a more accurate technique for examining the balance of the statement can calculate the word-count percentage of each section by dividing the total number of words in the statement into the number of words in each section. Through examination of the word-count percentages of the three sections of a written statement, investigators can determine the relative lengths of each section.

When individuals provide written statements about criminal events, the incident section should contain the greatest percentage of words because it constitutes the focus of the statement. Individuals who provide a much longer introduction than criminal incident section may be delaying the discussion of the incident by focusing on previous actions. A reference to the length of introductions appeared as early as 104 to 63 B.C. in one of the Apocryphal books, which relates the history of Judas Maccabeus prefaced by a verse from 2 Maccabees 2:32: “At this point, therefore, let us

begin our narrative, without adding any more to what has already been said, for it would be foolish to lengthen the preface while cutting short the history itself.”⁴ The suspect or victim who lengthens the introduction while cutting short the criminal incident section may be revealing the likelihood that the statement contains deception.

A missing person case can illustrate the value of examining the relative lengths of the statement sections. A man called 911 to file a missing person report. He stated that he dropped off his wife for an early morning jog and she had not returned by the afternoon. Investigators asked the husband to write down what happened. He could have focused his statement on his wife’s departure, her normal running route, and his frantic attempts to locate her. Instead, the husband concentrated on what happened before he discovered that his wife was missing. He wrote at length about arguments that the couple had in the days preceding his

wife’s disappearance, resulting in the introduction containing 82 percent of the total words in his statement. An examination of the three sections of the statement revealed an extremely short criminal incident section compared with such a lengthy introduction. In fact, the description of the criminal incident (the discovery that his wife was missing) used only 7 percent of the total words, with the conclusion accounting for the remaining 11 percent. The brevity of the criminal incident section indicated that the husband’s statement lacked critical information. For example, he failed to mention any search for his wife or any phone calls to her friends and relatives. His later admission of strangling his wife during an argument confirmed the lack of veracity in his statement.

Analysis of the 60 statements in the authors’ study revealed a positive statistical relationship

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Research Overview

The authors selected 60 statements written by suspects or victims during the investigation of violent crime and property crimes. They chose this number based on the knowledge that research results tend to stabilize after 30 observations. Therefore, they used 30 statements that investigators concluded were truthful and 30 that investigators found deceptive. The investigators determined veracity or deception through the conviction by a judge or jury, overwhelming physical case evidence, or corroborated confession by the offender. For many of the statements, all three conditions applied.

In choosing the 60 statements, the authors considered six selection factors: clear case resolutions, open-ended instructions, legibility, original language (not translated into English), redundancy by individual, and redundancy by incident. They used each selection factor to eliminate as many potential confounding factors as possible. Once they had selected the statements, they had them typed for computer-searching purposes.

between the percentage of words in the criminal incident section and veracity. The criminal incident section—the essence of the statement—directly answers the question, “What happened?” Statements with an unusually long introduction followed by a short criminal incident section inform investigators that the writers did not concentrate on the primary event, the criminal incident. Therefore, focused interviews with the writers of such unbalanced statements may help investigators uncover vital missing information concerning the crime.

Presence of Unique Sensory Details

A second relationship that the authors found between veracity and features of the examined statements involved the inclusion of unique sensory details. Such information recounted by a suspect or victim includes detailed depictions of the five sensory perceptions—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. In an assault case, for example, a truthful victim might describe the alcoholic smell of an assailant’s breath or the rough feel of his callused hands. Unique, rather than generic, descriptions add to the specificity of the sensory details. The following excerpts from truthful

statements illustrate unique sensory details in the five sensory categories:

- *Sight*: “I looked back and saw that the car was in total flames.”
- *Sound*: “I heard a very loud thud.”
- *Smell*: “I had to change her diaper ‘cause she smelled awful.”
- *Taste*: “It was so bitter that I couldn’t drink it.”
- *Touch*: “The window blew out, and I felt heat on my face.”

Studies contrasting truthful, experienced memories with false, or constructed, ones have shown that the experienced memories contain more sensory information.⁵ Similarly, in studies of oral statements, researchers have found that truthful accounts include more details than deceptive ones.⁶ When the authors examined sensory details in the 60 written statements, they also found a positive statistical relationship between the presence of sensory details and veracity. Overall, the truthful statements contained a specificity of sensory details not found in the deceptive ones.

In examining sensory details, investigators must consider whether an alleged victim or a

suspect provided the statement. One written by a falsely alleging *victim* may reveal a lack of sensory details because the person could not perceive any sensory data from a fictitious incident. A statement written by a deceptive *suspect* may disclose the same lack of sensory details, but for different reasons—either to avoid providing a truthful account that would implicate the writer or to refrain from supplying detailed false information that a competent investigator could refute. The location of the sensory details within statements also can provide clues to investigators. In the examined statements, the authors found a positive relationship with veracity and sensory details located within the criminal incident section of the statements, whereas no statistically significant relationship existed between veracity and sensory details in the introduction. In the criminal incident section of a bank robbery getaway driver’s truthful account, she described a dye pack exploding as the car left the bank, including sensory details of sight, sound, and touch.

I heard three pops (sound) and the car started to fill with red smoke (sight). I couldn’t see (sight) and was having a hard time breathing (touch). I started to cross over the yellow line (touch/sight), and he yelled at me to calm down (sound). I finally pulled over to the side (touch). When I opened the door, I fell out (touch) because I was choking and having a hard time breathing (touch).

Deceptive writers, as well as truthful ones, included sensory details in the introductions of the examined statements. The deceptive writers may have provided truthful information in this part of their statements. The sensory details may have represented accurate recall of events that preceded

the criminal incident. An introduction filled with sensory details followed by a criminal incident section devoid of such details, however, should alert the investigator to scrutinize the statement. For example, a woman reporting an assault revealed a decreasing amount of sensory details. She described specific details about her actions before the assault occurred. But, she filled the criminal incident section with vagueness and equivocation, rather than with sensory details. She wrote “some-

one” instead of “a tall man wearing a black ski mask” and “sort of poked a weapon” instead of “jabbed the gun into my neck.” Suspects or alleged victims who include sensory details in the introduction but not in the criminal incident section should receive carefully planned follow-up questioning to explore why they omitted such critical details from the most important part of their statements.

The presence of sensory details indicates an increased likelihood that the detailed part of the statement is truthful. Other parts of the statement, however, may not be totally truthful. As an example, a young man admitted that he burned his car for insurance reasons. He provided the following written statement, which began with sensory details but ended with a vague, equivocal description and three examples of the negation word *not*:

I turned off the hard-top road, got out of the car and left it running (touch). I reached in and dropped it in gear, steering it over the hill (touch). The car went way over an embankment (sight). I walked down and shut the car off (touch). I removed the keys and soaked the whole car in gasoline (touch). I took a cigarette lighter and lit it (touch). I took off back up the steep hill (touch).

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Through examination of the word-count percentages of the three sections of a written statement, investigators can determine the relative lengths of each section.

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I caught a ride with someone (vague and equivocal) on the hard-top road, but I'm not sure (negation, lack of knowledge) who it was. I'm not sure (negation, lack of knowledge) where I went right after that, but I ended up at my house. I really don't remember (negation, lack of memory) much more than what I've told you.

The detailed part of the statement gave a truthful account of a car arson. In the remainder of the statement, however, the owner omitted sensory details, such as the descriptions of the person who gave him a ride and the vehicle. He used equivocation and negation to avoid supplying a complete account of the arson. Further investigation revealed that a friend had followed the suspect to the arson site and provided the ride home.

Inclusion of Emotions

The final part of the research involved examining the relationship between veracity and the inclusion of emotions in the 60 written statements. An emotion is defined as a physiological change from homeostasis experienced in strong feelings, such as fear.⁷ Researchers have categorized emotions into eight main families: fear, anger, sadness, enjoyment, love, surprise, disgust, and shame.⁸ Each emotion family includes a range of similar emotions that evokes the same physiological responses. For example, fear emotions range from anxiety and apprehension to fright and terror.⁹

Memory studies have revealed that the recall of experienced events includes more affective information, such as emotional reactions, than the recall of created events.¹⁰ In oral statements, researchers have found emotional experiences present in truthful witness accounts but not generally in constructed ones.¹¹

A victim of a quickly occurring traumatic event may not be aware of emotions until the trauma ends, when the emotions flood into consciousness. Such emotions, therefore, may appear in the conclusion of a statement. Truthful victims may include specific descriptions of fear, anger, embarrassment, or shock in their conclusions.¹² Because emotions in the conclusion reveal the crime's effect on the writer, the presence of emotions may provide a clue that the event actually was experienced, not fabricated. As an example, the bank robbery getaway driver wrote that she "was nervous and scared" and "heard a gun shot and jumped because it scared me." The descriptions of fear in her written statement indicated that the incident described likely did happen.

In the authors' study, the examination of emotions in the conclusions proved more informative than in either the introductions or the criminal incident sections. The conclusions of statements allow victims and suspects to react to what previously has happened.

After truthfully describing being raped, a victim included this sentence in her conclusion: "I was hysterical and locked all the doors." By noting any references to emotions in the conclusions, investigators may gain valuable insight to how crimes emotionally affect victims and suspects.

The inclusion of emotions in statements appeared to differ with the specific type of crime. When the authors examined all 60 statements, they found a weak positive relationship between veracity and emotions in the conclusion sections. They found the strongest and most significant relationship between veracity and emotions in the conclusions of homicide statements. Suspects and witnesses writing about murder incidents might be expected to be more emotionally involved than



those writing about crimes of a less serious nature because homicides involve loss of life of the victim and loss of freedom (or life) of the offender. A witness to a homicide wrote in his conclusion, "I was scared out of my mind."

Conclusion

Instead of relying solely on indicators of deception to discern truthful statements, investigators also can gain insight from indicators of veracity. Overall, the authors' study of 60 written statements revealed three clues to veracity.

- 1) In truthful statements, the criminal incident section was typically the longest of the statement. This did not hold true for many of the deceptive statements examined, which had longer introductions.
- 2) Truthful statements included more unique sensory details than deceptive ones, particularly in the criminal incident sections.
- 3) In the conclusions of many truthful statements, writers described their emotions, especially in serious crimes, such as homicides.

Although these three dimensions only indicate the *likelihood* of veracity, the inclusion of unique sensory details and emotional reactions can alert investigators to the possibility of truthfulness in written accounts. The absence of sensory details, particularly in conjunction with a relatively short criminal incident section, can serve to identify areas of statements needing additional probing during interviews of suspects and alleged victims.

Statement analysis techniques provide insight to areas of veracity and deception within written statements. Statement analysis is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end; the end is the discovery of the truth. ♦

Endnotes

¹ Susan H. Adams, "Statement Analysis: What Do Suspects' Words Really Reveal?" *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 1996, 12-20.

² Veracity is defined as information that can be verified as being accurate. In this article, the authors use the terms *truthfulness* and *veracity* interchangeably.

³ Don Rabon, *Investigative Discourse Analysis* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1996).

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The authors express sincere appreciation to all who submitted statements for inclusion in this study. This research and similar projects rely upon the vital assistance that law enforcement officials provide.



Unsolved Sexual Assault/Homicide

On May 21, 2002, Stephanie Renee Bennett, a 23-year-old white female with brown hair and brown eyes who stood 5' 5" and weighed 125 pounds, was found sexually assaulted and murdered in her apartment located in northwest Raleigh, North Carolina. Stephanie recently had graduated from college and had lived in the apartment for about 10 months with two female roommates, one of whom was her stepsister. At about 3:30 p.m. on May 21, 2002, Stephanie's stepsister authorized apartment management personnel to enter the apartment for a welfare check after she could not contact Stephanie at the apartment. Stephanie was discovered deceased.

The Crime Scene

Stephanie Renee Bennett and her two roommates lived on the first floor of a three-bedroom corner apartment in a building centrally located within the complex. Evidence suggested that the offender's initial contact with Stephanie was in her bedroom. Egress into the apartment appears to have been made by removing the screen to an unlocked window in one of the unoccupied bedrooms. Even though there was very little disturbance within the apartment, including no signs of a

struggle, some articles (pictures and stuffed animals) deliberately had been moved from one location to another. Additionally, a cordless telephone unit, consisting of the base and handset, was disconnected from the cord in the bedroom and placed in the bedroom closet. The offender took the victim's nightwear and an old stereo when he left the apartment.

Stephanie was found completely nude, lying on her back, with her legs spread open and her head tilted to one side. In her mouth was a gag (a pair of unused panties that belonged to one of her roommates). Visual marks were on Stephanie's wrist and ankles and are contributed to a form of restraint used by the offender to immobilize her. These marks are similar to those left by handcuffs or a narrow type of restraint, such as a telephone cord or electrical ties. A well-defined ligature injury mark encompassed Stephanie's neck and several marks at the rear base of her neck gave the appearance that a garrote-type device was used in conjunction with the ligature. The restraints and ligature were removed by the offender and taken with him when he left the crime scene. An autopsy report disclosed that Stephanie was sexually assaulted orally, anally, and vaginally. DNA from the unidentified offender has been profiled and is maintained in the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation Laboratory.

Alert to Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies should bring this information to the attention of all crime analysis and sexual assault units, as well as officers investigating crimes against persons. Also, the offender's DNA profile should be provided to local and state laboratories for comparison purposes. Any agency with similar crimes should contact Homicide Detective Lieutenant Chris Morgan of the Raleigh, North Carolina, Police Department at 919-890-3934 or Crime Analyst Glen W. Wildey, Jr., ViCAP, Quantico, Virginia, at 703-632-4166 or gwildeyj@leo.gov. ♦

One-Shot Drops *Surviving the Myth*

By ANTHONY J. PINIZZOTTO, Ph.D., HARRY A. KERN, M.Ed., and EDWARD F. DAVIS, M.S.



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On a summer evening in the northeastern part of the United States, a patrol officer received a radio dispatch at approximately 7 p.m. to respond to an address for a disorderly subject. The officer arrived at the location and parked his patrol vehicle on the opposite side of the street, several houses away. Before exiting the vehicle, the officer paused to observe the scene. He saw a male move from behind a large tree in front of the address of the alleged disorderly subject. The officer started to exit his vehicle, but then stopped

when he saw the male, with a gun in each hand, begin to run toward him. The man fired both weapons at the officer, who returned two rounds from his service weapon, striking the male in the center of his chest. However, the man continued to fire. One round struck the officer in the head, killing him instantly. The male survived the two gunshot wounds and later was convicted of killing the officer.

This scenario is a collage of several cases dealing with the use of deadly force, by and against law enforcement, that

the authors have examined over the last decade. Studying these cases and interacting with officers attending the FBI National Academy,¹ who have experienced similar incidents in their own agencies, have led them to question if officers have died because of any of the following factors:

- The type of weapon issued to the officer.
- The type of ammunition the department issued for service rounds.
- The lack or quality of self-defensive training provided to the officer.



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- Overconfidence because the officer was wearing a bullet-resistant vest and, thereby, took unnecessary chances.
- The officer's own preparation for a violent encounter, such as wearing a bullet-resistant vest or remaining in excellent physical condition.
- The officer's choice to notify dispatch of the location during a traffic stop or other encounter with suspects.
- Any other circumstances presently unknown to the officer's department.

In the opening scenario, did the officer "hesitate" after firing the two rounds that struck the offender? Was he instructed to "double tap" and pause, as many departments once trained? The authors have learned from their research on law

enforcement safety that there exists a significant hesitancy on the part of many officers to use deadly force. However, they have not determined the reason for either the hesitation or why officers stop shooting before they neutralize the threat. One question they can answer is that handguns used for protection *are* capable of immediately eliminating a deadly threat quickly. However, the fact largely remains that bullet placement, rather than caliber, causes immediate stoppage of body functions in most instances.²

With all of this in mind, then, if officers are adequately armed, what causes them to fall victim to criminals wielding less powerful weapons? An examination of the myth of the "one-shot drop," data relative to the type of weapons offenders

have used to attack officers, and effective survival and firearms training may help law enforcement agencies begin to reverse this tragic trend.

THE MYTH

In many of the classic, albeit simplistic, cowboy movies from the early days of the American film industry, the stereotypical "good guys" wore white hats, whereas the "bad guys" donned black ones. After meeting in the middle of a dirt street in some small town, two shots would ring out. The bad guy's bullet always missed, but the one from the hero in the white hat inevitably found its mark and freed the town of the criminal threat. With one shot from the good guy's gun, the bad guy immediately dropped to the ground and became completely incapacitated.

In today's films and television programs, Hollywood has varied not only the clothing of the actors but also their standards and demeanor, both the good guys and the bad guys. It now has become difficult to distinguish the protagonist from the antagonist. Unfortunately, however, this increased realism has not always carried over to the portrayal of gun battles. Many current shooting scenes continue to display unrealistic reactions and underlying expectations regarding ballistic effects. For example, one shot from a handgun often lifts the wounded person 2 feet off the ground and causes immediate incapacitation.

Even knowing that these are movies and television programs, some in the law enforcement community still expect one-shot drops in real-life shootings. In fact, few actual instances end this way.

Realistic and regular law enforcement training must counterbalance and mentally and emotionally override the fallacy of the one-shot drop still promoted by some media. Short of disrupting the brain or severing the upper spinal column, immediate incapacitation does not occur.³ Therefore, the threat remains to the officer. Yet, implicit in the media presentations of law enforcement encounters is the belief that with the

"proper handgun" and the "proper ammunition," officers will inflict immediate incapacitation if they shoot offenders anywhere in the torso. Varied and multiple real-life law enforcement experiences contradict this false and dangerous belief.

“Realistic and regular law enforcement training must counterbalance and mentally and emotionally override the fallacy of the one-shot drop....”

Actual Shootings

In the authors' ongoing study of violence against law enforcement officers, they have examined several cases where officers used large-caliber handguns with limited effect displayed by the offenders. In one case, the subject attacked the officer with a knife. The officer shot the individual four times in the chest; then, his weapon malfunctioned. The offender continued to walk toward the officer. After the officer cleared his weapon, he fired again and struck the subject in the chest.

Only then did the offender drop the knife. This individual was hit five times with 230-grain, .45-caliber hollow-point ammunition and never fell to the ground. The offender later stated, "The wounds felt like bee stings."

In another case, officers fired six .40-caliber, hollow-point rounds at a subject who pointed a gun at them. Each of the six rounds hit the individual with no visible effect. The seventh round severed his spinal cord, and the offender fell to the ground, dropping his weapon. This entire firefight was captured by several officers' in-car video cameras.

In a final case, the subject shot the victim officer in the chest with a handgun and fled. The officer, wearing a bullet-resistant vest, returned gunfire. The officer's partner observed the incident and also fired at the offender. Subsequent investigation determined that the individual was hit 13 times and, yet, ran several blocks to a gang member's house. He later said, "I was so scared by all those shots; it sounded like the Fourth of July." Again, according to the subject, his wounds "only started to hurt when I woke up in the hospital." The officers had used 9-millimeter, department-issued ammunition.

The surviving officers reported that they felt vulnerable.

They wondered if they had done something wrong that caused their injury or placed them in the proximity of physical danger. They also wondered if they would react differently if faced with a similar situation.

Practical Expectations

Social science discloses that if people expect to see something, they well may see it. For example, in basic psychology courses, instructors generally include the perceptual set theory, which shows students a picture. Although exactly the same picture, it appears to some as an old woman, whereas others see a young woman. People often see what they expect to see. This explains why so many sightings of the Loch Ness "monster" turn out to be floating logs.

Officers' expectations of how they will respond when shot significantly affect their reactions to these situations. Development of advanced, practical expectations may be

Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed in the Line of Duty with Firearms 1993-2002

Size of Ammunition	Total Slain	While Wearing Body Armor	With Own Weapon
.22 caliber	28	9	2
.25 caliber	18	11	1
.32 caliber	9	6	0
.32-20 caliber	1	0	0
.357 magnum	30	19	5
.38 caliber	65	28	5
.380 caliber	43	24	0
.40 caliber	34	24	11
.41 magnum	1	1	0
.44 magnum	11	7	1
.45 caliber	36	24	5
.455 caliber	1	1	0
.50 caliber	1	1	0
7.62x25 millimeter	1	1	0
9 millimeter	136	65	14
9x18 millimeter	1	1	0
10 millimeter	2	0	1
Size not reported	25	10	0
Total	443	232	45

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2002 (Washington, DC, 2003).

influenced best by clarifying misconceptions and imparting new knowledge during purpose-driven training concerning the topic. Absent a clear, purposeful understanding of the session's training objectives, little influential and practical learning can occur. Further, lack of purposeful training may prove detrimental to an officer's practical

expectations, psychological preparation, and capabilities when employing complex tasks in response to the significant stressors of a life-threatening, critical incident.

Humans are largely differentiated from animals through their miraculous ability to develop skills and abilities to perform multiple, complex

Offenders Justifiably Killed or Committed Suicide 1991-2000

Year	Justifiably Killed by Victim Officer	Justifiably Killed by Other Than Victim	Committed Suicide
1991	2	6	5
1992	3	6	5
1993	2	7	6
1994	4	12	9
1995	4	5	8
1996	1	14	3
1997	2	6	12
1998	2	11	4
1999	0	5	5
2000	3	6	5
Total	23	78	62

Source: Compiled by members of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division with data from U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2002 (Washington, DC, 2003).

THE DATA

To better grasp the scope and gravity of the myth of the one-shot drop, the authors provide an overview of felonious, line-of-duty law enforcement officer deaths. From 1993 to 2002, 636 officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty.⁴ Offenders used handguns, ranging from .22 to .50 caliber, to kill 443 of the officers.⁵ Forty-five of these victims were slain with their own weapons.

Fifty-six of the 443 officers (12.6 percent) were killed by small-caliber weapons that fire lightweight bullets at low velocity and included .22, .25, and .32 calibers. Undoubtedly, no officer would consider any of these firearms as a primary weapon of choice, and no records indicated that agencies issued any of these to their uniformed patrol officers.

Concerning the 45 officers killed with their own weapons, 3 were slain with small-caliber rounds from backup/off-duty weapons they carried, either .22 or .25 caliber. Twenty-five

tasks simultaneously through repetitive practice. By necessity of minimizing risk to themselves and others, officers effectively learn many firearm-use procedures and tactics through a progressive building-block process. Herein, initial exposure is given to learning gross and fine motor skills. Some conscious behaviors develop into subconscious ones. Officers progressively hone skills to a reasonable level of mastery, then apply them under shorter time constraints during which they must incorporate and

maintain mental processes of assessing their surroundings and changing conditions. Trainers need to remain cognizant of the role that repetition plays in the mental processes reinforced during training scenarios and courses of fire. From learners' perspectives, ideal firearms and tactics training objectives should embrace an achievable notion that they will learn "something new" about their personal performances, skill levels, and capabilities with their equipment each time they receive training.

officers (56 percent) were killed with their 9-millimeter or .40-caliber service weapons, common to law enforcement during the time period examined. The remaining 17 officers were slain with other weapons, including .38 caliber, .357 magnum, 10 millimeter, .44 magnum, and .45 caliber.

In two previous studies on violence against law enforcement officers conducted by the authors, offenders stated their reason for selecting a particular firearm as availability, 41 percent in the first study and 68 percent in the second.⁶ These offenders did not care about bullet weight or velocity. The majority of the offenders in both studies had been involved in prior shootings before assaulting or killing the officers. Their major concern was being “fast on the trigger” and delivering the bullet to its intended target. One stated, “There’s no time to sight up the gun. If you hesitate, you’re dead.”

Because of the time needed for adjudicating these offenses, the most recent disposition data available for offenders involved in line-of-duty law enforcement officer felonious deaths are for the 10 years 1991 to 2000.⁷ Of the 665 persons charged with killing a law enforcement officer for this time period, only 9 remained fugitives. The majority (464) of these individuals

were arrested and convicted of murder. The victim officers justifiably killed only 23 of their attackers. Other officers responding to the scene killed an additional 78 offenders. Sixty-two of the perpetrators committed suicide after killing the officer. In their ongoing research, the authors are examining if any of these incidents could have started as an officer-assisted suicide or, more commonly, suicide by cop.

“

Such an exercise emphasizes that the officer must aim at a distinct spot on the torso to achieve incapacitation, rather than merely shooting at the entire target.

”

THE TRAINING

A firm understanding of what an officer possibly may expect if shot or severely injured during a violent confrontation with an adversary remains crucial. This includes heightening an officer’s awareness about establishing a survival mind-set and practical measures to combat reactions

to extreme stress concerning natural physiological, psychological, and emotional responses that occur in normal people during abnormal situations. Such training is imperative in *conquering* survival versus *succumbing* to an otherwise treatable, recoverable injury.

Survival Training

Effective survival training should provide a clear understanding of how authorized weapons and ammunition likely will perform under varying conditions to 1) strengthen officer confidence in personal skills with equipment and 2) prepare officers to efficiently and quickly incapacitate/control a threat against life. First and foremost, officers should possess a working knowledge about terminal ballistic performance of bullets when fired through intervening obstacles that they, by necessity, may have to shoot through and penetrate to incapacitate a violent adversary. Some common intervening obstacles encountered in law enforcement shootings can include heavy clothing; building materials, such as wood and drywall; automobile windshield glass; and sheet metal used in vehicle doors. Such obstacles may alter terminal projectile performance (i.e., the medium may plug or

close the hollow point of a bullet, making it perform as a ball round or become deformed and, thus, limit penetration).

Officers also should know about ammunition performance at different, reasonable distances. Such training promotes greater understanding of agency policy when applied to different situations encountered in daily work experiences (i.e., when it is reasonable to shoot, not shoot, or seek alternate methods of self-preservation). Agencies using firearm ranges of 25 yards or fewer may consider options of periodically shooting at reduced-size targets, simulating a longer-distance handgun shot.

Finally, officers should possess a basic understanding of the human anatomy and related system functions from a three-dimensional perspective. Training should visually convey the placement and vulnerabilities of the cardiovascular system (heart, lungs, and blood-bearing organs) and the central nervous system (brain and upper spinal column). Knowledge of how these human systems likely will respond to low-velocity projectiles, such as from most handguns, and high-velocity ones, such as from high-powered rifles, will augment officer awareness that reactions to being shot may not occur immediately. Perhaps more important, this information can help

prevent officers from forming a false assumption or preconceived expectation that the adversary *will be* rendered immediately harmless following a well-placed shot from their firearm.



Firearms Training

Well-rounded firearms training programs should include instruction and courses of fire emphasizing fundamentals of marksmanship and position shooting. However, from a survival aspect, additional training points require consideration. Examples include alternate courses of fire that possess phases unfamiliar to the officer, as well as a preset number of fired rounds, such as routinely employed in qualification courses and largely gathered for the purpose of establishing a “standard” of proficiency if needed in litigation. Alternate

courses of fire (e.g., specialized combat courses), by design, should reinforce desirable behaviors and thought processes. Combat courses should necessitate officers shooting until they incapacitate the threat (target) or the threat ceases. This can help *prevent, rather than encourage*, psychological reinforcement and presumption that the threat will desist after firing a given number of rounds. If lethal force is warranted and appropriate under the circumstances, the officer *must shoot until the threat ceases*.

Use of cardboard or paper targets, although economical, inherently forces personnel to perceive bullet impacts on a single plane of reference without dimension—much different from a human simulation with dimension and placement of organs/skeletal structure of a body. An occasional mix of training on a three-dimensional target, such as clothed mannequins, preformed targets, and other devices limited only by imagination, may better demonstrate and encourage personnel to exercise critical-thinking skills for delivering optimal shot placement and effectiveness. An example is a shooting scenario requiring accurate shot placement on a three-dimensional target at an adverse angle substantially different from the usual 90-degree target

placement in many training scenarios due to range design, safety, and economy of training resource time.

Economical, three-dimensional reaction targets made of cardboard to resemble a torso are available. These targets, suspended by heavy string or cord to one or two inflated balloons inside the body of the device, can become lifelike by placing old clothing, such as a shirt or jacket, on the exterior. When one or both of the balloons are struck by a bullet, the balloon pops and the target drops from its suspended position. Such an exercise emphasizes that the officer must aim at a distinct spot on the torso to achieve incapacitation, rather than merely shooting at the entire target.

New technology incorporated into training simulators portraying lifelike, real-time scenarios permits course designers to define the zones of immediate or quick incapacitation similar to the relative area on a human body. Additionally, designers can denote zones of incapacitation based on the angle and distance of the adversary from the officer, as well as scenarios representing body armor worn by the adversary.

CONCLUSION

Just as in the days of the American Old West when only

the peace officers' superb gun-handling abilities stood between them and the violent outlaws of their time, today's law enforcement professionals still must rely on their firearm skills to protect their communities from similar lawlessness. Employing deadly force against another human being is not an easy choice, nor should it be.

“Effective survival training should provide a clear understanding of how authorized weapons and ammunition likely will perform under varying conditions....”

However, when an individual is intent on causing grave bodily injury, even death, to officers sworn to uphold this nation's laws, those officers must react responsibly and quickly to protect their communities and to avoid the loss of innocent lives, as well as their own.

The perpetuation of the one-shot drop by movies and television programs has no place in the real world of violent criminals bent on their destructive missions. Officers must realize

that they have to continually hone their survival skills, always expect the unexpected, and never give up; they must protect themselves to protect their communities. ♦

Endnotes

¹ The FBI hosts four 10-week sessions each year during which law enforcement executives from around the world come together to attend classes in various criminal justice subjects.

² “Physiologically, a determined adversary can be stopped reliably and immediately only by a shot that disrupts the brain or upper spinal cord. Failing to hit the center nervous system, massive bleeding from holes in the heart, or major blood vessels of the torso causing circulatory collapse is the only way to force incapacitation upon an adversary, and this takes time. For example, there is sufficient oxygen within the brain to support full, voluntary action for 10 to 15 seconds after the heart has been destroyed.” See U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Firearms Training Unit, FBI Academy, *Handgun Wounding Factors and Effectiveness* (Quantico, VA, July 14, 1989), 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2002* (Washington, DC, 2003).

⁵ Members of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division collected and supplied this information to the authors for this article.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Killed in the Line of Duty* (Washington, DC, 1992); and, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Institute of Justice, *In The Line of Fire: Violence Against Law Enforcement* (Washington, DC, 1997).

⁷ Supra note 4, 44.

Book Review



Practical Aspects of Rape Investigation: A Multidisciplinary Approach, edited by Robert R. Hazelwood and Ann Wolbert Burgess, CRC Press, Washington, DC, 2001.

Practical Aspects of Rape Investigation is a state-of-the-art book on the comprehensive investigation of sexual assaults and rapes using a multidisciplinary approach to ensure the effectiveness of efforts. It represents the latest "contemporary bible" on modern investigative awareness, with the methods, information, and techniques specifically focused on the victims, investigators, forensic scientists, prosecutors, and perpetrators of sexual crimes.

The book presents a unique understanding and the motivations of the criminal that provides investigators, responders, and technical supporters with the latest insights into the offender's behavior and allows for a more complete and systematic investigation into such crimes. It is a book by the experts in the fields of multidisciplinary approaches involving members of the uniform and investigative branches of law enforcement; prosecution, behavioral science, and forensic science personnel; and special populations of victims, including their victimology and attackers, all with the

primary mission of effective case investigation, management, and prosecution.

The book offers contemporary information methods and techniques through 24 chapters systematically loaded and incorporated into five distinct sections. Section I addresses the victims of sexual assault and rapes, their thoughts and reactions, and the often-overlooked sexual crimes committed in nursing homes. Section II categorizes the rapist from a profile standpoint and discusses the fantasies and motivations regarding serial sexual crimes, including behavioral interviews with rape victims. It also covers false allegation investigations, the typology of offenders who commit assaults on children, the latest on cyberstalking pedophiles and investigations thereof, and the identification and use of collateral materials in sexual crime investigations and prosecutions.

Section III contains the latest in physical evidence and evidence recovery considerations. It discusses forensic science examination, collection, and observation of physical and trace evidence of the victim, offender, and the crime scene, as needed, in a multi-disciplinary approach. Sections IV and V update the latest information concerning juvenile and female sexual offenders, with findings about the serial rapist that contradict popular stereotypes about serial criminals.

Numerous areas stand out in the book, but three emerge above the others. First, the book gives a valuable typology on analyzing sex crimes from the viewpoint of the offender, rather than only from the victim, society, or mental health professionals. Second, the book uses several real cases (names protected) in selected chapters to set the stage for capturing the valuable concepts and techniques and their applications, including a proposed investigative model concerning false allegations. Third,

the book contains a case study supported by the criminal investigative analysis concept and methodology applied against the study supported with a recommended questioning sequence for professional multidisciplinary investigative results and completeness.

Practical Aspects of Rape Investigation is a book that every active multidisciplinary member involved in investigating and responding to sexual assaults and rapes should not only read but keep nearby to assist them in their duties. The book could help law enforcement agencies select investigators to handle these crimes and aid all multidisciplinary agencies conducting sexual assault and rape investigations and responses prepare written policies and procedures. It contains information on practical approaches for cyberstalking

investigators and image task force members. Sexual assault nurse examination programs and the multidisciplinary departments of universities and colleges could incorporate elements of the book into their efforts. Overall, implementing the information, concepts, and techniques in this book should assist ongoing investigations and coordinate more arrests, convictions, and resolutions of cases, with a spin-off of providing for a safer society through cost-effective efforts.

Reviewed by
Larry R. Moore
Certified Emergency Manager
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The Bulletin Honors



The Cumberland County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office presents this law enforcement memorial, located in the courtyard between the agency and the county courthouse. This monument, dedicated on May 11, 1999, features two light granite walls containing the names of county, city, state, and military officers killed in the line of duty in Cumberland County. In the middle of the two light walls is a dark granite wall featuring a kneeling deputy holding his hat in prayer.

Police Trauma and Addiction

Coping with the Dangers of the Job

By CHAD L. CROSS, Ph.D., and LARRY ASHLEY, Ed.S., LADC



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Law enforcement officers face traumatic incidents daily. These events, typically unexpected and sudden, fall well beyond the bounds of normal experience;¹ hence, they can have profound physical, emotional, and psychological impacts—even for the best-trained, experienced, and seasoned officers.

The ability to cope with stressful incidents is a personal journey that depends on an officer's past experiences with

trauma; appropriate development of coping strategies for stress; availability of support networks (e.g., family, friends, and colleagues); and recognition of the dangers of ignoring signs and symptoms of post-incident stress, which is a normal response to abnormal circumstances.² Regardless of an officer's personal experiences with traumatic incidents, avoiding, ignoring, or burying the emotional aftermath of a traumatic event can lead to serious

short- and long-term consequences. Sadly, however, some officers believe that substance use and abuse may offer the best way to cope with their otherwise unbearable feelings.

Certainly, not every officer deals with stress and trauma by abusing chemicals, and not every officer who chooses to abuse chemicals does so to numb the effects of trauma. However, overwhelming evidence suggests that the two factors often *are* linked,

particularly in the high-stress environment of police work. Therefore, law enforcement administrators need to understand the responses to trauma and stress, the link between trauma and substance abuse, and the strategies for intervention and treatment needed to help their officers survive the rigors of their chosen profession.

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA AND STRESS RESPONSES

Critical incidents experienced by law enforcement officers are broad and far-ranging. A retired officer turned counselor, who survived a serious assault early in his career, has suggested that “any situation in which an officer’s expectations of personal infallibility suddenly become tempered by imperfection and crude reality can be a critical incident.”³ Examples could include an officer-involved shooting, the death of a coworker, serious injury while on duty, life-threatening incidents, hostage situations or negotiations, exposure to intense crime scenes, a police suicide, or any situation that falls outside the realm of normal experience.

Stress responses and the symptoms resulting from such incidents can be cognitive (confusion, difficulty concentrating, or intrusive thoughts), physical (fatigue, headaches,

or changes in appetite or sleep patterns), behavioral (withdrawal, acting out, or substance use), or emotional (anxiety or fear, depression, anger or guilt, or feelings of helplessness).⁴ Most often, a combination of these symptoms emerges—frequently worsening and compounding as multiple traumas occur over time. If officers do not develop or take advantage of avenues for coping with stress appropriately, physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion (“burnout”) can result.

Diagnosis of Psychological Stress Responses

Similar to military combat veterans, law enforcement officers experience a plethora of treacherous, violent stresses on

a daily basis.⁵ The psychological aftermath of such experiences can be either acute or chronic and can emerge or reoccur across broad temporal scales. While on active duty and upon returning to civilian life, military personnel—and, likewise, law enforcement officers—carry this stress-laden emotional baggage, which can produce multitudinous residual effects that, all too often, lead to substance use and abuse.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is associated most often with critical incidents experienced by law enforcement officers,⁶ but many other diagnostic criteria could be linked to stressful incidents, including such disorders as adjustment, mood, anxiety, impulse-control,



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and substance abuse/dependence. PTSD includes symptoms that develop owing to experiencing intense fear, helplessness, or horror, which, in turn, often can lead to reexperiencing the traumatic event, avoiding situations associated with it (even if not experienced at the time the event occurred), and “numbing” of the arousal response. These symptoms cause impairment or distress in social or occupational functioning. If the symptoms persist for more than 1 month or appear for the first time 6 months after the event, then possible PTSD would need to be investigated. If the symptoms appear and subsequently disappear within a 1-month time frame, then acute stress disorder should be investigated.⁷ Of note, subclinical individuals may chronically develop PTSD symptoms indistinguishable from those formally diagnosed with the disorder if they remain untreated.⁸

Impacts of Trauma

The impact of traumatic experiences differs for every individual; however, beginning with the studies of combat fatigue after World War II, similarities across individuals have led to a generalized conceptualization of expected stress reactions, particularly those that might lead to career burnout. If or when this occurs, law enforcement organizations and

other first-responder public safety agencies may find themselves understaffed, unable to perform expected duties, and faced with increased apathy, suicide rates, and substance abuse.⁹

Generally speaking, stress responses begin with anxiety and panic reactions, which often lead to difficulties in concentration and feelings of being overwhelmed or out of control.

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Alcohol and other drug abuse are maladaptive behaviors associated with stress and trauma....

”

This can progress to physical symptoms, such as tachycardia, gastrointestinal distress, and hypertension. If intervention does not occur, then worker apathy tends to increase, leading to absenteeism, lateness, procrastination, and increased use of chemical substances (e.g., tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, pain killers, or sleeping pills). If officers continue along this path, then major depressive symptoms begin to increase, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness abound, suicidal

ideation and rates increase, and, all too often, substance abuse to dull these feelings leads to addiction and dependence.¹⁰

LINKING TRAUMA AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance use and abuse among law enforcement officers represent widespread, albeit somewhat underreported, phenomena. Alcohol and other drug abuse are maladaptive behaviors associated with stress and trauma, and when these behaviors emerge in law enforcement, the profession must afford them special attention.¹¹

Alcohol Use and Abuse

Studies have indicated that nearly one-quarter of law enforcement officers are alcohol dependent as a result of on-the-job stress; however, researchers believe that this estimate falls well below the true number due to incomplete reporting.¹² A study of 852 police officers in New South Wales, Australia, for example, found that nearly 50 percent of male and 40 percent of female officers consumed excessive amounts of alcohol (defined as more than 8 drinks per week at least twice a month or over 28 drinks a month for males and more than 6 drinks per week at least twice a month or 14 drinks a month for females) and that nearly 90 percent of all officers consumed alcohol to some degree.¹³

The unique subculture of the law enforcement profession often makes alcohol use appear as an accepted practice to promote camaraderie and social interaction among officers.¹⁴ What starts as an occasional socializing activity, however, later can become a dangerous addiction as alcohol use evolves into a coping mechanism to camouflage the stress and trauma experienced by officers on a daily basis.¹⁵ When the effects of the alcohol wear off, however, the stress or trauma that led to the drinking episode still exists.

In addition, researchers have identified four occupational demands that can trigger alcohol use by law enforcement officers, namely depersonalization (reacting unemotionally to the everyday stresses of the job), authoritarianism (officers' behavior governed by a set of regulations, making them feel as if they are not in control), organizational protection (the structure in place to protect law enforcement agencies from criticism), and danger preparation (the stress related to officers knowing that their lives potentially are in constant danger).¹⁶ Some may argue, then, that alcohol use among officers serves both as a personal coping mechanism related to socialization and presumed stress/trauma reduction and also as a reaction to the internal stresses created

by law enforcement agencies themselves.

Drug Use and Abuse

Other drug use also is on the rise in law enforcement agencies.¹⁷ This increasing problem has led to the establishment and maintenance of drug-testing programs. Though this has caused numerous challenges within the legal system, an ever-growing movement toward maintaining a drug-free workplace exists throughout law enforcement agencies.¹⁸



Sadly, those officers, clinically diagnosed or not, facing the aftermath of traumatic experiences may feel that drugs can help numb their pain, if only temporarily. Additionally, law enforcement officers maintain a role that may make them more susceptible to abusing drugs. For example, they have ample opportunities to obtain

drugs because they often come in close contact with illegal substances and the individuals who use or deal in them; they learn how, why, when, and where to obtain and use drugs and the rationalizations for such use from drug offenders; and they may find that drugs offer a way to help them cope with the constant stress on the job and the ever-present traumatic incidents that they encounter.¹⁹

Impacts of Substance Use and Abuse

Both the acute and chronic impacts of substance use and abuse often lead to profound negative consequences. Not limited to the individual user, these consequences can extend to loved ones, colleagues, the employing agency, and the citizens who depend on law enforcement personnel. In other words, substance abuse by law enforcement officers is not a personal journey because they *always* must be prepared to conscientiously and continually react, respond, serve, and protect. Such high expectations can prove difficult to meet when sober, let alone when impaired by alcohol and other drugs or while recovering from using such substances.

Alcohol and other drug use and abuse have both overt and covert social and economic costs, including lost productivity and wages; increased family

problems, including risks of domestic violence; and rising costs to the criminal justice system to respond to, house, or adjudicate substance abusers.²⁰ When substance abusers are members of the public safety sector, the problems multiply—employees can become unable to perform their sworn duties, administrators can find themselves increasingly overburdened trying to deal with a problem that can result in negative perceptions of their agencies, and the public can lose faith and trust in the system.

Substance use may lead to a number of problems for law enforcement officers and their agencies. When officers deal with stress or trauma using alcohol and other drugs, they may find that they simply

cannot perform their duties adequately. They often become agitated, hypervigilant, and aggressive. They feel tired and overwhelmed and have difficulty concentrating on their work. Family problems mount, and officers become isolated. Accelerated substance use leads to occasional and then progressive lateness and absenteeism. Continued use may result in the inability to perform the job at all and intensified feelings of worthlessness and apathy, causing officers to become more and more depressed and confused. Ultimately, the end result is a tremendous increase in the risk of suicidal ideation, which studies have linked strongly to alcohol and other drug use among law enforcement officers.²¹

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF TRAUMA AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance use often begins with the best intentions—a means of social interaction. However, when the mind-numbing qualities of alcohol and other drugs become a means of coping, albeit a short-sighted one, substance use then may progress into abuse and dependence because officers see no other avenue of reducing stress. More stress often means more chemical use, and, before long, officers may find themselves in a dangerous cycle. Unfortunately, however, this means that the officers never dealt with the real problem or issue in a satisfactory way; it remains an open wound that often cannot heal on its own, despite the best efforts of self-medication.

Where and when, then, does the cycle of trauma/stress and substance use/abuse end? If appropriate intervention does not occur, tragedy may result. But, agencies do not have to wait for tragedy to occur; they can act *beforehand* to save their officers.

Intervention Strategies

Traditional trauma/stress intervention involves some type or form of critical incident stress management or debriefing;²² however, recent researchers have questioned the

Resources

R.G. Dunham and G.P. Alpert, eds., *Critical Issues in Policing: Contemporary Readings*, 3rd ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997).

J.M. Violanti, *Police Suicide: Epidemic in Blue* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1996).

J.M. Violanti, D. Paton, and C. Dunning, eds., *Post-Traumatic Stress Intervention: Challenges, Issues, and Perspectives* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 2000).

The Web site <http://www.cophealth.com> provides a wealth of information, including articles, books, and psychological material.

ability of these techniques to reduce the symptoms stemming from trauma.²³ These techniques may prove useful for some, but reactions to traumatic events and the stresses inherent in police work make a more individualized model more appropriate in many circumstances.²⁴ Situations may indicate individual and group mental health treatment, along with professional or peer counselors, as a necessary part of the intervention. However, treating law enforcement officers can pose some challenges to mental health personnel.

Traditionally, law enforcement officers have viewed the mental health profession with some skepticism because they often did not feel that counselors understood what it meant to do police work. To combat this mind-set and deal effectively with officers, counselors must receive some unique training. They also must have—

- a grounding in policing;
- a localized knowledge of the agency and administrations within which their clients reside;
- a unique comprehension of the trauma and stresses inherent in police work;
- an understanding of the dark humor often used by officers to vent stress-induced anger and frustration; and

- an ability to build rapport by establishing a trusting, respectful atmosphere wherein they can assure officers of complete confidentiality.²⁵

A unique field, substance abuse counseling requires specialized training to appropriately and legally administer assessments and treatments. The first intervention for substance abuse should occur at the earliest possible time—*before* recruits become law enforcement officers. Police academies

“...avoiding, ignoring, or burying the emotional aftermath of a traumatic event can lead to serious short- and long-term consequences.”

should contain didactic training in substance use and abuse and the inappropriateness of such behavior in police work. Increasing awareness at this stage of professional development not only puts useful and necessary information into the hands of future officers but also raises their awareness of the many potential problems, both personally and professionally, that

substance use can cause. Additionally, training at this stage reaffirms that the law enforcement agency administration understands the pressures inherent in police work that may lead to substance use and abuse. Further, instruction by senior officers during the training phase provides appropriate models of behavior and sends the message to young recruits that they need not resort to substance use as a means of coping with the trauma and stress of the law enforcement profession.

Many brief interventions exist for initial stages of substance abuse, and most have focused on group interventions where members discuss the pros and cons of binge drinking and alcoholism. These discussions often focus on the health effects of alcohol and other drug use, an understanding of societal norms as a baseline to compare an individual's personal consumption, and the cognitive-behavioral interventions to change the thinking patterns associated with substance use.²⁶ Long-term, heavy drinkers, on the other hand, may need detoxification and a period of recovery before introducing psychoeducational intervention.²⁷ Providing a supportive intradepartmental atmosphere for officers in need of this level of intervention is a necessary component.

Integrated Treatment Approach

It seems clear that treating trauma/stress and substance use/abuse should occur in complement. After all, police trauma and stress will not disappear nor will substance use and abuse within the ranks. What can change, however, is the atmosphere within those law enforcement administrations that may tend to downplay, rationalize, or deny addictions. To help effect this change and to save time, money, and, most important, lives, law enforcement agencies can invest in an integrated model of awareness and treatment. To help agencies, the authors offer some considerations in developing such a model.

Support Services

- Law enforcement agencies should have mental health professionals trained and certified in addictions counseling on staff for consultations, interventions, and referrals. They should offer police counselors trained in policing who have knowledge of police infrastructure, programming, and administration.
- Agencies should have trauma teams that include mental health professionals on call for consultations and interventions when needed.

- They should make employee assistance professionals available to provide confidential services outside the agency.
- Agencies should institute peer counseling programs.²⁸ Ideally, these peer counselors would have experiences in both trauma and addictions or would work in teams to develop integrated

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Similar to military combat veterans, law enforcement officers experience a plethora of treacherous, violent stresses on a daily basis.

”

programs. Officers are more likely to respect the experiences of fellow officers over outside professionals, and the models of positive behavior that such peer support groups offer may be a key component of successful intervention.

Training and Research

- Young recruits should receive training in recognizing stress, dealing with traumatic incidents, and

understanding the negative effects of substance use and abuse.

- Law enforcement agencies should make critical incident trauma management training available to all officers on an ongoing basis. Officers often receive training in such programs for the treatment of the citizens they protect. But, a strong effort also needs to focus internally within law enforcement agencies, specifically aimed at the traumatic incidents most often encountered in police work.
- Agencies should provide ongoing training to continually educate their officers on the effects of alcohol and other drug use. Agencies frequently serve their communities by supporting alcohol and other drug prevention programs, yet, all too often, they neglect the problems of their own personnel.
- Law enforcement agencies need to learn the value of early intervention programs over treatment programs and how to provide a supportive atmosphere that acknowledges trauma and addiction intervention efforts within their organizations. Further, upper-level officers and administrators need to exhibit empathy toward

their officers, provide services when necessary, and encourage open communication about addiction problems in their ranks.

- Researchers, mental health professionals, and law enforcement experts need to further examine the role that trauma, stress, and addiction plays in the lives of all first-responding public safety personnel and find new methods of intervention and treatment to help these dedicated men and women deal with the tremendous pressure of their profession.

CONCLUSION

All members of the law enforcement community have an important role to play when it comes to evaluating, intervening, and treating trauma and addiction. When officers suffer the aftermath of trauma, they are not alone. Many may tout their “tough guy” image, see themselves as weak or abnormal if they seek help, and believe that admitting psychological or emotional pain will result in disciplinary action and, perhaps, job dismissal. Unfortunately, however, severe anxiety reactions, workplace apathy, absenteeism, and depressive symptoms have far-reaching impacts, not only on the officers suffering the trauma but, importantly, on their colleagues, the families

they love, and the public they have sworn to protect and serve. Adding substance abuse to this already tragic scenario tremendously increases the potentially harmful impact—for when chemical substances enter the picture, *everyone* loses. ♦

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Endnotes

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The Bulletin Notes

Law enforcement officers are challenged daily in the performance of their duties; they face each challenge freely and unselfishly while answering the call to duty. In certain instances, their actions warrant special attention from their respective departments. The *Bulletin* also wants to recognize those situations that transcend the normal rigors of the law enforcement profession.



Officer Gibson



Officer Holtman

Officers Adam Gibson and Brent Holtman of the Quincy, Illinois, Police Department responded to a report of a suicidal person adjacent to a busy four-lane highway. Upon their arrival, the officers found a distraught woman holding a box cutter to her throat. She resisted the officers' efforts to persuade her to surrender the blade. Anticipating the woman's attempt to lunge into moving traffic in hopes of being struck by a car, Officer Gibson tackled her before she could reach the highway and Officer Holtman tried to restrain the woman, who now was attacking her throat with the box

cutter. Fortunately, the officers disarmed her before she could inflict life-threatening wounds. The brave actions of Officers Gibson and Holtman saved this woman's life.



Officer O'Connor

Officer Kevin O'Connor of the Ottawa, Illinois, Police Department was the first officer to respond to a report of a fire at an apartment complex. Upon his arrival, Officer O'Connor was advised by tenants that they could not make contact with one of the residents. Officer O'Connor immediately went to the apartment, where he observed thick black smoke coming from under the entrance. Upon forcing open the door and calling inside, he heard someone screaming from the apartment. After entering three times and receiving minor burns, Officer O'Connor was able to locate the victim and pull him to safety. The man then received immediate medical help and later recovered from his extensive injuries. The

heroic actions of Officer O'Connor prevented this man's death.

Nominations for the **Bulletin Notes** should be based on either the rescue of one or more citizens or arrest(s) made at unusual risk to an officer's safety. Submissions should include a short write-up (maximum of 250 words), a separate photograph of each nominee, and a letter from the department's ranking officer endorsing the nomination. Submissions should be sent to the Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Madison Building, Room 201, Quantico, VA 22135.

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Patch Call



The patch of the David City, Nebraska, Police Department features an eagle surrounded by three words that describe the feelings that the agency's officers have toward their work. The terms include *courage*—"to take action when needed;" *knowledge*—"to know when to act and when not to;" and *integrity*—"to maintain oneself in a position of public trust."



The patch of the Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office features the agency's colors—green and yellow. The hornet's nest at the center of the patch serves as a reminder of the county's colonial heritage. Ardent supporters of the American Revolution, locals made the area what British forces described as "a hornet's nest of rebellion."